

May 14, 1999

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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

re: Docket #98N-1038: Irradiation in the production, processing and handling of food

To All Concerned:

I follow the issue of food labeling with great interest. I consider it the responsibility of government to ensure that producers provide consumers with important information regarding the content of their food.

Last week I listened to a radio show out of Boston called, "The Connection," with Christopher Lydon. He and his guests tackled the issue of genetically engineered food for an hour. Representatives from both sides of the issue were given the opportunity to comment.

A spokeswoman from Monsanto presented us with a hypothetical situation. She asked us to imagine all of our vegetables and fruits having labels that describe the techniques used in production. Such a label would include all the insecticidal, herbicidal, and fungicidal sprays used on the farm. She seemed to think that this illustration would alert people to how laughable is the idea that production methods be disclosed.

Well I think it's a darn good idea! I also think it's a good idea to continue to clearly label all foods that have been irradiated. It is my understanding that irradiation lowers vitamin content of foods, and creates free radicals within the food. It is my right to know whether the cabbage I'm getting is the one that has the normal cabbage nutritional value, or the reduced nutritional value and free radicals. I want my cabbage to prevent cancer, not cause it. Same for all the food I eat.

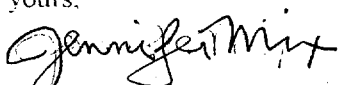
I'm not saying that we can ever have complete control over the content of our food. I am aware that our environment is so persistently toxified there is hardly such a thing as "pure" any more. I realize that there are countless natural toxins and carcinogens found in fungi, bacteria, and the natural world as a whole. But on this, we have no choice.

I urge you to continue to require clear labeling of irradiated food, using both the easily recognizable symbol and the word "irradiated." This follows the recommendation of the Center for science in the Public Interest.

And you might want to consider that idea of labeling all the pesticides found on fruits and vegetables while you're at it!

Thank you for your work on behalf of the American citizens.

Respectfully yours,



Jennifer Mix, Marblehead, MA

JM/jm

Cc. Senators Kennedy and Kerry. Representative John Tierney


98N-1038

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re: docket # 98N-1038' 20857/0001 

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